DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 631 EC 305 821

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TITLE Nurturing Minority Adolescents' Giftedness through Facilitating Individual "Voice".
PUB DATE 1997-08-01
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the World Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc. (12th, Seattle, WA, August 1, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Students; *Cultural Differences; Earth Science; Educational Strategies; Enrichment Activities; Geophysics; *Gifted; Grade 8; *High Risk Students; Hispanic Americans; Journal Writing; Junior High Schools; *Minority Groups; Peer Relationship; Resident Camp Programs; *Science Instruction; *Self Expression; Student Empowerment; Summer Programs

ABSTRACT

This paper describes how a geosciences summer program for 50 Hispanic and Black eighth graders with high potential from at-risk backgrounds, planned and executed activities designed to empower these youth by teaching them strategies to develop effective "voice," while concurrently nurturing abilities and inspiring significant career aspirations. To have "voice" is defined as being able to express and test ideas, beliefs, and attitudes with a responsive audience with assurance that others are listening and perceiving the person as credible, with potential to affect decisions and outcomes favorable to the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes expressed. Specific program strategies designed to achieve these goals included: (1) a period of each day assigned to a brief journal writing session, in which the youth were expected to respond to the prompt of the day that related to science or math growth, specific experiences in the environmental science curriculum, and personal growth, feelings and attitudes; (2) peer interaction among the youth, who were from six different school/urban sites, promoted through team-based geoscience field experiences and problem solving, and through leisure activities; and (3) relaxation and leisure group activities, as well as evening discussion sections, guided by camp staff and the director. The personal attention of caring teachers was, perhaps, the lynch pin that made all of the strategies planned so successful that without exceptions campers left expressing in various ways that this summer month was one of the most important experiences of their lives to date. (Contains 24 references.) (CR)

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ED 411 631

NURTURING MINORITY ADOLESCENTS' GIFTEDNESS THROUGH FACILITATING INDIVIDUAL 'VOICE'

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Paper Presented at the 12th World Conference of the
World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc.
Seattle, Washington, USA
August 1, 1997

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Nurturing Minority Adolescents' Giftedness through Facilitating Individual 'Voice'

To have 'voice' means one can express and test ideas, beliefs, and attitudes to a responsive audience with assurance that others are listening and perceiving us as credible. Voice facilitates development of competence, shapes identity formation, and fosters manifestation of one's gifts and abilities. Voice must emerge from within the individual, but can't do so effectively without communication skills and empowerment and support from others. Minority gifted adolescents have a particularly difficult time in accessing voice because they must establish and reconcile cultural identity while becoming increasingly aware of differences in status and access to opportunities to nurture their gifts. This presentation will describe how one program, for fifty Hispanic and Black eighth graders with high potential from at-risk backgrounds, planned and executed activities designed to empower these youth through teaching strategies for development of effective voice, while concurrently nurturing abilities and inspiring significant career aspirations.

Nurturing Minority Adolescents' Giftedness through Facilitating Individual 'Voice'

To have 'voice' means one can express and test ideas, beliefs, and attitudes to a responsive audience with assurance that others are listening and perceiving us as credible, and with potential to affect decisions and outcomes favorably through the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes expressed. The concept has emerged primarily in the feminist literature (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Maher & Tetreault, 1994), reflecting a predominating perception of life experiences as consisting most frequently of situations in which unilateral control by others determines allocation of resources, acceptable processes, and distribution of outcomes; thus, acquiring 'voice' is perceived as necessary to alter that unilateral condition in order to participate fully and equilaterally in those life experiences.

Within the field of gifted education we propose that the 'voice' of youth with gifted potential has not always been considered to exist or is not listened to (Langram, 1997), that is, adults have been assumed to have the necessary experience and wisdom to make major decisions needed to develop that potential, much as petroleum engineers do to develop the potential of an area of oil deposits. Yet, individuals such as Bill Gates, who decided that four years of college was not going to provide him what he needed to develop his potential in the field of computer technology and entrepreneurship, was able to find more effective ways to meet his needs than the expected traditional education route. For him, **'voice'** was developed early in life through the affirmation of parents and colleagues, unusually responsive resources throughout his early years of schooling, and the successful experiences in productive decision-making that accompanied these good fortunes.

We will propose in this paper that nurturance of giftedness will best proceed when educators at all levels develop the capacity of gifted youth to express their needs---both intellectual and socio-emotional---and their ideas regarding how those needs might best be met, concurrently developing their own capacity to attend to that voice. In this way, curriculum and educational programs can emerge which reflect not only the wisdom and experience of adult planners and deliverers, but also the intrapersonal intelligence of the gifted recipients of those programs---neither a child-centered, permissive orientation, nor a rigid, teacher-dominated curriculum with adult expectations (Roeper, 1997).

We might consider 'voice' as a component that through its internal origin can uniquely direct development of one's competence, shape satisfactory identity formation, and foster unique manifestation of gifts and abilities. During adolescence youth seek to understand their own identity in a world that often seems hostile and lacking in understanding. In fact, the adult world **is** often

hostile and impatient with what it perceives as unacceptable inconsistencies in the behaviors, goal pursuits, and responsibilities assumed by these youth, despite comparable inconsistencies in their own adult world. Gifted youth fare even less well than average ability youth in this respect as they encounter additional lack of understanding and greater expectations from adults who fail to understand the developmental asynchrony between intellectual development and emotional development.

Our premise is, that while adult experience and wisdom is needed for guidance, too often these adult socialization decisions overbalance the process of actualizing one's potential, a process that should ideally be a partnership between youth and adult. We need only examine the Eriksonian period of industry versus inferiority characterizing the initial years of schooling (Erikson, 1963) to realize how often educators opt for their own view of what exactly industry entails versus the child's view and, in turn, foster underachievement or subvert talent actualization!

Minority gifted youth have yet another burden during this period of development in that they must establish and reconcile their cultural identity while becoming increasingly aware of differences in status and access to the appropriate opportunities for nurturing their gifts while concurrently maintaining satisfactory ties with their culture. Thus, it is important that we find ways to foster, shape, and support their voice for expressing their needs and ideas as associated with both their culture and their unique gifts. Too often we as educators have been unaware of the critical nature of the cultural identity task (Ford, Grantham, & Harris, 1996). Just as often, educators have been unaware of the volatile nature of the combined tasks of simultaneously defining oneself as (a) an emerging adult, that is, an adolescent (when it is unclear what duties, responsibilities, and privileges can be assumed from day to day); (b) an unique individual with special gifts (when one can not be certain these gifts are in fact ones that will be valued by others with whom co-existence must occur); and (c) an Hispanic, Black, Native American or other cultural minority member (when even the adults of one's cultural heritage diversely address acculturation, adaptation and bicultural responses) (Haensly & Lehmann, 1996).

Despite the fact that 'voice' must emerge from within the individual, it can not do so effectively without well-developed communication skills along with empowerment and support through affirmation from significant others. In this paper we will describe how one program for minority adolescents with high potential planned and executed activities designed to empower these youth through (a) teaching them strategies for development of an effective voice, one that can generate responsiveness rather than obstruction from others who hold access to needed resources or opportunities; (b) valuing the diversity of their gifts which may as yet be in an emerging state; (c) challenging and stimulating their intellect and social responsiveness to consider both their personal responsibilities and rewards; and (d) inspiring significant career aspirations while concurrently nurturing the gifted abilities these youth possess.

Research and Theoretical Foundations

Gifted Programming and the Emergence of Voice

Effective voice for the individual emerges through trial, practice, and constructive feedback. It is important to recognize that while voice is ultimately a matter of influence on those individuals with greater authority and power within one's environment such that the environment becomes more favorably disposed to meeting one's needs, that voice is most certainly tested and shaped as it emerges within and among one' peer group. (This is true whether we are considering adolescent youth, gender groups, or cultural/racial groups.) However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that for gifted youth the effectivity of such peer interactions on voice may depend upon the comparative intellectual readiness or capacity of the peers, as well as the nature of the group in that regard in reference to its homogeneity or heterogeneity of ability (Lando & Schneider, 1997).

In comparing intellectual contributions and mutual support among developmentally advanced youth (eighth grade students) in homogeneous and heterogeneous work and discussion groups, Lando and Schneider (1997) found a number of relevant, distinguishing differences in type of feedback that age peers provided. For example, interactions among homogeneously grouped students with Average range Full Score IQ's and average 8th grade achievement levels tended to be uni-directional with the contributor receiving little feedback from his or her peers. In contrast, interactions among the homogeneously gifted youth (Very Superior range Wechsler IQ scores and above age norm achievement levels) "were characterized by mutual contributions of abstract and insightful cognitive input. . . often trigger[ing] a chain of multiple elaborative responses " (Lando & Schneider, 1997, p. 49). Similarly, such complex cognitive input, along with prosocial behavior differences, was found to be replicated in youth heterogeneously grouped, where most gifted students exchanged feedback primarily among themselves in the form of constructive types of knowledge and mutual reinforcement, but limited interaction with their non-identified age-mates to tutoring efforts.

Although the sample of youth involved in the program that is reported in this study is not so clearly identified with regard to individual IQ ability level as those in the Lando and Schneider study, and the youth are Black or Hispanic rather than Caucasian, and from both homogenous and heterogeneous ability programs, they are distinguished by their consistent above average academic achievement among age-mates and by their persistent efforts toward accomplishment prior to their participation in the program described. Thus, we might assume that mutually productive interactions among the participants of the program to be described here could also emerge or be characteristic, facilitating the youths' abilities to engage confidently and evaluatively in intellectual dialogue, as if their ideas mattered and had impact on each other and on the adult world.

In addition to the opportunity to develop voice to express the world of ideas, the intellectual component, voice must also be developed to express the social and emotional concerns of being gifted. Using self report questionnaire-type response format for data obtained from participants of an 8-week summer program in mathematics, computer science, science, and specialties in business or engineering, researchers prepared a concept map of the individual experiences of being gifted (Kunkel, Chapa, Patterson, & Willing, 1995). Entrance requirements for this program included a 90% or above average record in all academic subjects and in some cases being certified by school counselors as gifted. Of the eight clusters of experiences that appeared to emerge from the respondents, such as Intellectual and Social Superiority, Estrangement, Conformity and Social Stress (all essentially centered on self feelings toward their own situation), only one cluster, Respect from Others, and within that cluster only three response categories, seemed to include experiences relevant to the topic of voice (that is, being able to connect self with others outside the category of giftedness). Those response categories or experiences were described as "being able to get my thoughts across to other people", "getting help when I need it", and "teachers treating me with respect".

Although Kunkel et al's concept map (1995) reflects a limited concern by gifted youth regarding specifically their own responsibility for purposefully extending themselves into their social environment (as contrasted to the greater expression of their feelings about how they view themselves within that social environment), that deficit bias may be the result of long-standing assumptions by both participants and researchers that there does exist a unilateral control of resources and responses by those outside of "the gifted experience." We do not believe that such an assumption can in all cases be supported, however, as we can see from the literature on resilience (Werner, 1995), or that describing the roots of success and failure of talented teenagers (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde & Whalen (1993), in which it becomes apparent that some individuals can and do take charge of what happens to them despite adversity.

Using the Gifted Youth's Voice to Shape Programming

". . . best growth occurs when adults and children together go through that door. . . . Listening to the child, we find a curriculum in the making which can be pursued together,. . " (Roeper, 1997, p. 166) It has become quite clear from a number of studies with gifted, culturally diverse youth that despite the individual efforts of these youth to seek academic and intellectual challenge and to succeed in school programs, for many, relevance of the curriculum to their racial and cultural experience is inadequate if not indifferent, and affirmation of their racial/cultural identity in positive ways is absent. Underachievement, unclear or confused identity, and disturbed social and emotional well being thus become major barriers to the development of their gifted potential, especially for Black, Hispanic and other involuntary minority youth (Ford, 1995; Grossman, 1984; Ogbu, 1992).

In a recent article by Ford, Grantham and Harris focusing on the need for educators to develop more effective multicultural education in gifted programs (1996), the authors' analysis of the current situation indicates that development of individual voice by participants in such programs is key to bringing about a curriculum that will be culturally and racially relevant and capable of nurturing diverse manifestations of giftedness. For example, Ford, et al. (1966) identify nine biases students need to know exist in the reading and viewing materials assigned in their schooling in order to assess past and current conditions accurately, among them ***invisibility*** . Invisibility becomes an astronomical black hole, if you will, from which the voice of not only their heritage but also of the youth themselves can not be projected.

Almost as an aside, these authors further point out that "Teachers must listen to students' concerns and work to provide a learning environment that promotes a multicultural philosophy, as well as . . . structural changes" (Ford, et al, 1996, p.77). Although this vertical thinking approach (deBono, 1967) rationally focuses on the duty of educators, teachers, and administrators to alter the curriculum, educators have too often made changes based on a world view limited to their own "outside or majority culture" experience, with only other adults, Black and Hispanic educators serving as the translators or mediators for what is needed. While these adult, informed voices have been necessary as a call to action to alert the educational institution to the problems that exist, and to inform or instruct and lead in construction of appropriate changes, they may inadvertently have again overbalanced the gifted actualization and cultural adaptation process, as described earlier.

Applying a lateral thinking perspective instead (deBono, 1967) to the problems of culturally relevant curriculum might suggest that we should be problem solving from a different direction, assessing the voices of the youth themselves. ***Voice*** implies communication, and communication implies listeners who respond to speakers' views, attitudes and perspectives; we propose that the response that will occur through such ideal communication should be viewed as shared shaping and reconstruction of mutually responsive environments for both students and teachers, not as capitulation to the youths' directives as would be seen in unilaterally powered groups. What revolutionary changes might actually occur if teachers and youth were indeed listening to each other and mutually constructing cultural and age responsive environments, in which the voices of the youth mingled with the voices of teachers from many different world views and adaptively moved the curriculum and institution to a futuristic position not yet envisioned! Though Roeper (1997) was addressing more generally an approach to appropriate curriculum development for the gifted child, not specifically a culturally responsive curriculum, her ideas seem to capture the theme of ***voice*** and its essential nature in planning environments that can nurture giftedness for minority adolescents as well:

> Rather than submit to the acceptance of the swinging pendulum with its emphasis on relationship or on curriculum. . . if we truly understand children's needs and their development, we will find a point of view which includes both of these but from another perspective. . . . best growth occurs when adults and children together go through that door. . . . Listening to the child, we find a curriculum in the making which can be pursued together, not resisted by the child, but greeted with enthusiasm. (Roeper, 1997, p.166)

Responsive Program Outcomes, and How Might We Know

Responsive curriculum, both cognitive and social /emotional, has specific outcome-characteristics and specific input variables, best identified through interpretive science and access to insider perspectives. A case for the power of specialized educational environments to nurture giftedness, both cognitive and non cognitive outcomes and especially as related to social context, presented by Coleman (1995), affirms the above described, relevant connection between program objectives and achievement of individual voice. Drawing attention to the value and availability of **insider** evidence (interpretive science, Popkewitz, 1984), Coleman describes seven non cognitive markers that appear when appropriate social contexts have been created to achieve this end of supporting development of giftedness. While each marker is relevant to **voice,** several are particularly related to the program characteristics and concept of voice as we have perceived them in this paper: "a change in the students' sense of what they might be capable of doing; a change in the students' sense of being able to associate with strangers and be successful;. . . a change in the students' sense of feeling free to express themselves and to still be accepted;. . . a change in the students' sense of being. . . a minority of one and still surviving" (Coleman, 1995, p. 173). Coleman further suggests that these outcomes represent power which he defines as emanating from "transfer of attitudes, skills, and/or knowledge learned in one specialized environment to other nonspecialized and specialized environments" (Coleman, 1995, p. 173).

In addition, Coleman presents five variables he believes important in the emergence of such a positive social context: the company and competition of others of high talent; personal attention from caring, trained teachers; optimal time spent in this environment; nature of the content; and certain kinds of program objectives. Coleman's proposal (1995) that these variables become a framework for further research in the field of research in gifted education, in which they might be tested and illuminated by an insider perspective as drawn from program participants, seems ideally suited to the purposes of the study reported here.

In this paper, we will present evidence gathered from the participants (youth and staff) of the 1994 and 1995 Camp Planet Earth (CPE) summer programs for gifted minority adolescents, that exemplifies Coleman's five variables and the accompanying markers of a successful social context. The findings will be organized under the following categories: (a) strategies specifically developed to foster acquiring 'voice', (b) valuing of emergent states of diverse gifts, (c) challenges

for intellectual and social responsiveness, and (d) fostering of significant career aspirations and relevant goal setting. Within these categories, we will also be identifying how highly talented peers and carefully structured competition, caring and trained teachers, timely immersion in a caring environment, instruction grounded in stimulating and relevant content, and specific program objectives, all contributed to the individual voices that we observed were being facilitated for these minority adolescents.

Method

Participants

Gifted Minority Adolescents. Fifty Hispanic and Black eighth graders, selected for a math-science, geosciences summer program from participants in statewide university-sponsored Outreach Centers qualified for the program by their academic records of minimum B average grades, an essay of intent and interest included with their application to the program, and an interview prior to acceptance to assure appropriateness of this program experience for their career and personal needs. Focus of the month-long program was environmental science stressing scientific inquiry, field experiences and problem solving, briefly situated at the sponsoring university campus and then for a more lengthy time extended into a Colorado mountain area. The major long term goal of the program was to assist promising minority youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to persist and succeed throughout high school in college prep courses, especially math and science. Concurrent goals were to generate interest in environmental science and to acquaint these youth with the possibilities of eventual academic and career pursuit at the host institution or other postsecondary sites. (See Haensly, Lehmann, & Fessler, 1995; Haensly & Lehmann, 1996; & Sturdivant, Giardino, Paris, & Valdes, 1994, 1995 for additional background on this program.)

At the time of the 1995 report (after which funding for such programs and subsequent data collection was halted to avoid potential anti-affirmative action suits), 44% of the 1994 camp participants had enrolled in and successfully completed science and mathematics courses during their ninth grade year. Of these, 64% were enrolled in courses designated as honors, gifted and talented, or advanced.

Adult Data Sources. Given the nature and value of interpretive science and insider evidence advocated by Coleman (1995) and reported in the above review of his proposal for needed research on this and related topics, it is appropriate to also describe the additional participants from whom data was obtained. First, the camp director, who was also a member of the cohort of principal investigators for this National Science Foundation (NSF) funded program, had extensive experience in secondary education, had been involved in the planning and conduct of an earlier version (1993) of this particular summer program as well as other programs directing extracurricular experiences for adolescent youth. While his racial background as an African

American may have given him special credibility in his interactions with the youth of this camp, he expressed the belief that it was his educational philosophy and long-standing interest in the social development of others rather than race that was important in his level of influence. His experiences in education and at the university setting have not been limited to minority youth. The second major source of insider information was a central staff member who organized and administered the journal keeping from which many of the youth's perceptions, feelings and attitudes have been extracted, participated fully in the month-long program experience with major responsibilities focused on the living, travel, and emotional needs of the participants, and who also had secondary teaching experience. Other staff members who served both as counselors and assistant instructors provided evaluative comments and tri-weekly ratings of social aspects of individual campers, which added confirmatory evidence and texture to the data obtained from other sources.

The first author of this paper provided analysis of the self-report instruments administered to the participating youth and reported results directly to the youth at the beginning of the program, assisted in the formation of the daily journal prompts used, conducted interviews of the above staff members, and conducted the major thematic analyses of the journal entries. The second author, an external planner and guide for the program, as well as data analyst for funding reports, provided oversight and insights for the details reported, assisted in the interview process and participated in the interpretive phase of the research. All of the above adult participants came to know the youth participants in quite personal ways directly or indirectly, in varying degrees depending upon intensity and length of contact with the youth.

Data Format and Collection

Data for the study reported here were obtained from several sources directly connected to the youth; e.g., thematic analysis of the students' 28 daily journal entries in which they were given prompts to facilitate reflection about their ongoing experience, as well as to promote writing and communication skills (Haensly, et al., 1995). In addition, career plots were constructed by each youth, once early in the program, and the secondly at the end of the camp. Standardized self-report measures of self concept (the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, Piers, 1984), interaction style preference (the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Myers & Myers, 1985) and use of specific study strategies (the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory, or LASSIE-HS, Weinstein & Palmer, 1990) were administered prior to the camp experience and feedback given to the students when they arrived at the camp, as well as provided to their individual Outreach Center directors for the youths' later reference upon returning to their home sites.

Relevant observations and comments were extracted from the self report instruments described above, the participants' journals, tri-weekly camp evaluations of the youth by camp counselors, and post-camp interviews with the camp director and the staff member in charge of journal writing and activities coordination. Semi-structured interviews with the camp director and

with a central staff member, conducted at the end of the second year of the project were recorded, transcribed and submitted for member check by the interviewees according to the guidelines of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After organization of the information in major categories, a second member check was conducted to ensure validity of the interpretations. Aspects of this general data collection relating specifically to mentoring are being compiled in another paper in progress (Haensly, Lehmann, Paris, & Fessler, in preparation).

Additional analyses and summaries of the data are included in the 1994 and 1995 NSF Mid-Year and Final Reports on Summer Science Camps - SSC- Program (Sturdivant, Giardino, Paris, & Valdes, 1994, 1995) and in other manuscripts (Haensly, et al, 1995; Haensly & Lehmann, in review).

Results

Strategies for Acquisition of Voice

In the design of this NSF summer science camp, Camp Planet Earth, two major goals relating to communication skills, self confidence, and self-esteem were articulated and formed the basis for a vision of empowerment of these youth to pursue desirable career goals and life satisfaction. These specific goals as stated in the funding proposal and annual report (Sturdivant, et al, 1995) were: (a) the Camp will provide participants academic support for their high school studies through sessions which focus on ***strengthening their skills in reading, writing, and communications*** with particular emphasis on helping students develop good study skills for mathematics and science courses; and (b) Camp participants will develop an ***increased level of self-confidence and appreciation of other's strengths*** through cooperative work assignments in data collection and analysis and through evening sessions which focus on issues such as leadership, team-building, and self esteem. Out of these goals, specific strategies to be implemented during the program emerged:

1. A period of each day (about 20 minutes) was assigned to a brief journal writing session in which the youth were expected to respond to the prompt of the day, one of a variety of 28 prompts relating to science or math related growth, specific experiences in the environmental science curriculum, and personal growth, feelings and attitudes, focusing at least once during the month on each of the time periods of past, present, and future projections.
2. Interaction among their peers, youth from six different school/urban sites, was promoted through team-based geoscience field experiences and problem solving, and through leisure activities.
3. In addition, relaxation and leisure group activities, as well as evening discussion sections were guided by camp staff and the director, with attention to individual sessions as the opportunity arose and to group sessions on the usually expected basis associated with such youth programs.

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Journal Entries as a Means for Self Expression. At one of the initial meetings of the camp participants upon arrival at the university setting, the staff member in charge of the social arrangements and of the journal writing provided a briefing for the journal writing. This briefing included purpose (to serve as a record for them of their camp experience which would return home with them at the end of camp), and assurances of anonymity in that their entries would not be shared with any of the direct CPE staff members nor their peers; their journals would also remain confidential and anonymous even when analyzed after the camp by a specialist outside of the active camp staff for purposes of preparing a program evaluation for funding justification and future planning. A list of 22 of the prompts used for the 1995 program, slightly modified from the 1994 list is included as an appendix to this article and an outline of the briefing may be found in Sturdivant, et al., (1995).

As cited in the 1995 Progress Report for CPE, the evaluation of the staff regarding the effect of the daily journal writing was that the youth experienced extensive practice in articulating in written form facts, feelings, and philosophical concerns. In response to one of the daily writing prompts, one on identifying their personal academic strengths and needs, 20% of the 1995 group perceived that communication, leadership and social interaction skills were already their academic strengths, apparently believing that these interactive skills would be important for school success as well as personal satisfaction. Yet, realistically, they also saw the need for improving their social interaction skills; as one male, an aspiring engineer, said "what I would love to develop . . . is my behavior because I have not learned to control that yet but would love to be taught how to control that."

Another cited "leadership, decision making and comprehending" as his strengths. . . adding, "I'm not a nerd or a jock, just a nice guy who tries to do his best." Yet another believed he was especially good at understanding things and teaching them to others, concluding "I hope I can help people with my strengths while others help me with mine." Other strategic skills that they listed for this prompt included "the ability to help and learn from others my age; listen well and follow directions; work with others when we have group problems. . . team work; listening skills.. " Throughout their journal writings from other day's prompts, there were frequent positive references to the interactions that they experienced with their peers. As all who work in classrooms know, such positive attitude toward peers usually emerges in a classroom climate where adults (teachers) have modeled that kind of positivism as a consistent way people interact!

As an example of the kinds of philosophical perspectives expressed and consequently internal voice experienced, with regard to the significant people they needed to think about as influences in their lives, their responses to prompt ten might be cited. This prompt asked them to describe heroes or mentors they had and the characteristics or attributes of these individuals which they perceived as important. All of the youth with the exception of two Hispanic males, ably

expounded on this topic, with 73% of them focusing on heroes or using hero and mentor interchangeably, while the remainder discussed mentors. The concept of "hero" tended to generate characteristics and attributes, while "mentor" tended to generate ideas about guidance and helping one to learn skills such as problem solving. The two youth who rejected the notion of hero or mentor seemed to have assimilated the common usage superhero concept. "I don't like heros. I'm not a follower. I'm a leader. I'm my own hero" was said by one who had identified prior to the program an introversion preference on the Myers-Briggs and was consistently evaluated by camp staff at 2's and 3's on leadership, social self-concept and sociability. The other, who by contrast was consistently rated highly as '5' on these same categories, stated "I don't have a hero or a mentor. . .. I see eye to eye with everyone. . .You should make yourself be your best and not try to be better than anyone else."

Nevertheless, the responses of the remaining 46 youth to this journal prompt flowed with richness of detail, specifying exactly what qualities should be present for an adult to be a significant influence in their lives---courage, bravery, strength, honesty, caringness, ability to "use one's brains" (integrated into at least 6 of the entries). One Hispanic female said she sought heroes who "use their brains before their muscle. . . accepting things they can't change but changing the things they can", another "a law-abiding, drug free, calm person. . . Hopefully, my hero will be someone who has finished school and has succeeded at his or her life." Another described "Heroes with brains interest me most because when they are in trouble they would always know what to do." Poignantly, one Hispanic male, would-be writer in his expressed career aspirations, described a hero or mentor as one "who will help others in need. . . and be loyal and nice. Not threatening like my dad." Yet another male, after citing people such as Dr. Garcia, head of G.I. forum for contributions to society or Nolan Ryan for teaching baseball camp, added "But most of all, my hero must be like my father!!!" Looking to her own future, one of the females stated "One of my many goals in life is to be a hero or mentor to someone. I want someone to look up to me. I want to feel like I have a positive influence on children and maybe even mixed-up adults."

Interaction with and Feedback from Peers. It was the intent of this program to help capable, prospective ninth-grade students become aware of their potential to pursue careers that involve mathematics and science skills, and to increase the number of students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who could construct the interest, attitudes and personal conviction needed to succeed in pursuing such careers. When this program was planned, affirmative action was still an active belief system and thus permitted funding to universities for a program designed especially to serve minority youth. This availability of peers within their own culture for interaction, in turn, permitted several of the cognitive markers to emerge that Coleman (1995) suggested become realized when appropriate social contexts have been created for developing giftedness, previously referred to by us as "acquiring voice". With a program limited

to a group of 50 adolescents per summer, it was believed this could be a uniquely appropriate time to bring together minority youth who would not otherwise have access to early experiences nor perspectives, nor the appropriately informed adult guidance to see themselves as professionals with careers rather than jobs, while fostering "increased pride and appreciation in their ethnicities and cultural sensitivity to other ethnic groups" (Sturdivant, et al., 1995, p.2). (Journal examples of the extent of this interaction may be found in Haensly & Lehmann, 1996.)

Camp Staff Leadership, Modeling, and Caring. The director of the camp program, in the interview question on how he saw his role in CPE prior to the camp experience, said "As one of organizing relationships between the kids and the kids and staff. An ombudsman, so to speak, one who would try to move the kids back to the middle from positions that might result in problems as they tried to interact with each other or with the staff. Also, as a mediator. . . We wanted them to have functional relationships, even if they might not have agreeable relationships." When asked how he executed this role, he described a diffuse energy in which "you first of all listen, listen to what they are really saying, then validate their statements so they don't feel they have to defend what they are feeling; then you. . . show them a different way they might look at the 'situation' so that you help them find a zone of comfort with their beliefs and feelings and with those of others." He described building their confidence so that they could tell you their feelings, convinced that you would be listening and "accepting them for whoever they are." He also pointed out the extent of energy and time that this kind of process takes, "I 'm glad the group was no bigger than it was, because it took so much time and energy to work with just those 50 over that period of time."

The staff were assigned specific groups of youth, grouped to minimize prior school/urban site relationships and previous gang associations without leaving them with no prior friends. These groups, cleverly titled reflecting the geographic regions of the Colorado country, attained a functional identity for their leisure activities as well as for distribution among various facets of the instructional activities. The staff were asked to rate from 1 to 5 each youth in their group on intellectual alertness, leadership, academic self-concept, social self-concept, and sociability three times a week, and to make comments or add anecdotes to illustrate. This rating process, while sometimes onerous, helped the staff retain objectivity regarding their charges and the interactions between cognitive and social goals, keep in mind growth aspects across the month, and reduce natural tendencies to become focused on outstandingly positive youth to the detriment of those youth who tended to be more quiet or had problems. The staff comments consistently reflected the thoughtful caring they exhibited in their interactions with the youth on a day to day basis.

For example, for one male consistently rated 4's to 5's after the first week, comments included "one of the best here, very intelligent, tends to be a bit quiet, but always wants to know more, above and beyond the lesson outline"; while for another male whose ratings decreased from

early 3's to consistent 2's on the above categories, the comments made included across various days that "he works well with peers, sometimes distracted by another female camper, very social, very smart but very cocky, difficulty in settling down and staying focused". Another female camper whose ratings varied greatly from day to day but ended with mainly 4's and 5's received comments such as "smart and witty, however appears to be intolerant of others different from herself; really upset today, heard a racial slur by some individuals from another camp, however she handled the aftermath quite well."

In his role with the other counselors/ staff, the director described how he and the other staff often sat around in a group trying to figure out what to do for one or the other of the youth. One of the young males whom the director came to know through his listening activities had much to deal with in his home setting where "he didn't want to feel compelled to do the gang thing, wanted to please his mother too, but he knew it was risky if he didn't participate in the gang. . . took his role of protector for his family seriously. . . caught between. . .consequences for friendship and even for safety. . . " The director stated that all the staff as a group helped, "yes, I think we made an impact in those 28 days ; he made friends at camp. He took 2 1/2 weeks to adjust and the last 1 1/2 weeks were good ones for him. But he still had to go back home and face the same decisions; we all agonized for him and even tried to think of how we could bring him back here instead of letting him go back to that situation." The day to day ratings helped the staff monitor progress, setbacks and leaps forward for the various youth.

One of the 1995 camper's last day journal entries sums up well how these youth felt about the attention the staff had given to their needs and the necessary ingredients of that attention: "I recommend that whoever gets a chance to apply for Camp Planet Earth should do so. It's a great opportunity to meet new and interesting people. I think that what makes CPE such a good learning environment are the counselors. They are funny and down-to-earth; they don't think that they are high and mighty or anything like that. They are smart and know what they are talking about, but they don't just tell us what they know, they teach us what they know. But more importantly they make it fun; they make us want to know what they have to say. It's also a great chance to visit places that you may never get a chance to do! CPE! All right!"

Valuing of Emergent States of Diverse Gifts

Ford (1994) reminds us that the key to success for African American youth is empowerment, which includes setting clear expectations for gifted African American students to enhance their school competencies---as well as allocating resources, as is done for students from the majority culture (Haensly & Lehmann, 1996). The central idea of Camp Planet Earth was one of both high expectations and specific and special resources for not only African American youth, but also Hispanic youth, girls and boys, who were particularly at a disadvantage in their urban school settings in this area of the country because of economics and minority culture status. These

were youth who had already been targeted for special assistance through University Outreach Centers in six metropolitan areas where school districts were characterized by high minority enrollment, sponsored by both of the major or flagship institutions of this southwestern state.

These centers, through experienced teaching and counseling staff, provided out of school assistance during the school year, guidance and support to the youth as they proceeded through their public schooling experience. The youth who applied for this camp had already proven their potential by maintaining strong academic records and an interest in this extension type opportunity (refer back to the description of this study's sample). While the content emphasis of CPE was specifically environmental science, generally math and science, it was expected that other areas of interest would be represented, especially at this pivotal time for identifying career areas to explore and pursue.

Thus, the staff were prepared to encourage and facilitate the wide range of gifts that might emerge during the program. As one youth who in her career plot projected a career for herself as a lawyer or a pediatrician, stated, "Each student is able to build up their self esteem and improve their leadership skills"; at the same time she saw a main purpose of the camp as one of developing a viable science fair project for submission during the proceeding school year through a schedule "crammed with academic activities". Another, a potential "medical biologist or surgeon", described the camp as a place where the teachers are great motivators, everyone knows everyone, you go to new places where you are aware of new things, and most of all everyone is friendly. A potential bookseller, Egyptologist and writer said, "Instead of just learning about some place in a book they take you there!" One youth who identified his career aspirations as musician and singer described CPE in poetic terms as a place that "helps you understand the way a river flows, how the water is potable, . . . pollution occurs. . .recycling".

Perhaps the most convincing outcome that demonstrates the valuing of diversity of gifts at CPE is the freedom the youth seemed to feel to identify as future careers everything from cartooning and painting to music to philosophy to helicopter repair, as well as the professions of law, medicine, teaching and engineering. Yet they were realistical enough to identify in their journal entries the strengths of this program as one where they had learned much about the environment and how to save and protect it, while also obtaining a good academic start for their high school experience. As one male said, "First, you can meet a lot of national parks such as Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Sand Dune, Grand Mesa, Lizard Head and more. Second, you can get a good jump on geology and its systems. Thirdly you can see new people and things such as snow, dorms, and others. You get a full schedule of academic classes and even attend a university. It's for you." This is a public relations expert in the making!

Challenging Intellectual and Social Programming

"They had to be independent, they had to take responsibility for their own behavior." Thus, the camp director of the CPE program described the social and emotional task facing these youth. He saw it as an unparalleled opportunity for personal growth for these youth and articulated strategies specifically geared to foster this growth. These eighth grade youth were almost all on the cusp of a major schooling event, that is, entrance into high school. As youth in urban settings this transition would present to them major changes in the way their instruction would be delivered, now with multiple teachers instead of one presenting the various content areas, and greater individual responsibility for their own task management and class input. It would also bring them into contact with new peers from a variety of other junior high schools, and all this at a time when their physical development often seemed to be presenting them with constant barriers from acne to weight problems as well as management of their emerging sexuality. The summer program gave them a foretaste of these changes and an opportunity to see how they could and would manage this new level of responsibility. However, planners of the program thought carefully about creating as psychologically safe an environment for this exploration of transitions as possible.

Despite some common misconceptions society has regarding the desire of teens to be free from their families, the youth coming to CPE seemed to care a great deal about them and depend on them for moral support and even guidance in day to day decisions. First day and first week homesickness displayed itself among many of them, with strange forms of institutional meals often receiving the brunt of their concern, at least on the surface, over their entrance into this new camp environment. Here in this new setting away from home and family for an entire month, almost all for the first time in their lives, they had to set aside homesickness and try to function without that familial support. They had, in fact, now to see the camp staff who served as instructors and counselors and their peers as family. The director stated, "we really became an institutional parent"; we could be with them there all the time, and stay with them until crises were resolved, although not to take the place of their biological families. As a matter of fact, on Day 1 when those parents who were dropping off their youth, the director would say to the parents in front of their kids, "I'm very protective of your kids during the time while you've loaned them to me."

Physical challenge was an initial strategy used at CPE, designed to promote a bonding of these teens with each other, to initiate the team spirit and mutual trust that would later play such an important part in their academic-oriented field experience. As a prime example of this aspect, on Day 1 and 2, the youth were led through a Challenge Ropes Course in which participation was expected although allowances for withdrawal were made at any point that they felt the physical challenge was becoming more than they could manage. In a journal entry for that day which asked them to write a letter to a friend about the challenge experience, all of the youth reflected

enthusiasm, ability to articulate their feelings, and an awareness of the real or hidden purpose of the activities. (Their journal responses to this activity are described in greater detail in Haensly, & Lehmann, 1996).

Physical challenge was also a significant part of their field experience in the San Juan National Forest of the Colorado mountains, where even a camping trip presented many new dimensions of living to most of these urban youth. They expressed great pride in the skills they learned; e.g., one said "I believe that I learned skills that will help me in the future." She and at least 22 others from that 1994 session found pitching their tents as a sometimes challenging but always necessary skill for camping, adding to her earlier comment, "the most important skills of camping. . . helping to pitch the tent!" As one girl said, "Exploring the outdoors made me feel like we are missing so much of nature [when] we live in the city."

Exploring and enjoying the river or the stream (where they also did water hydrology experiments, the academic challenge) was mentioned by at least 27 of the youth. They waded, swam, splashed each other, fell, got completely soaked in the freezing cold water and then enjoyed drying off on a sunny rock or boulder, all of this in the grandeur of a setting one described as "a magnificent place. . . so peaceful and it looks beautiful. . . There are no words that could describe how beautiful it was. I feel glad that I had the opportunity to come camping in a marvelous place like this. . . The smells give me a natural high. . . what makes all this even better is that I have friends to enjoy it with." One might think that these rising ninth graders had already developed a voice that can express joy, aesthetic appreciation, social and psychological understanding, and inner strength---the journal affirmed for her that it was o.k. to express these feelings.

These youth also expressed fears, as well as learning to trust and teamwork, in their journals and in the evening camp discussions. One said, "It took a lot of teamwork but we as a team got it done" In these journal entries during the field experiences of the camp sequence, students repeatedly reflected on how they were seeing teamwork and cooperative efforts as a critically important contribution to solving scientific problems in the field.

Academic challenge was integrated with the camping and out of doors experience. The major environmental and geosciences planner for this program was also the lead instructor. The director described this instructor's teaching approach thus, "He taught them as if they were [college] undergraduates, [simply] without background in the subject area [not as if lacking the skills to learn]. The need for academic challenge was especially apparent in the comparisons the youth made as they reflected back on their school experiences. In reflecting on those experiences, they repeatedly despaired over being "talked to", especially about things they could easily read or already knew, and about dull presentations where the teacher talked all the time while they simply took notes. The multitude of hands on field experiences made environmental science---from experimenting with stream hydrology to air quality---an exciting content to learn, even for the

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youth who didn't see themselves as becoming scientists in life (as will be seen from the career mapping to be described).

The director, himself, was often cited for his style of explaining things that made complex ideas very approachable. As he stated in his interview, "I don't think we specifically taught them strategies like an academic algorithm, we modeled strategies, then we got them to practice doing them. . ." One youth described the director's style, "he explained more math than my own math teacher. . .a better teacher. . . he applies himself as he encourages his students. . thanks R----, I'm going to straight high A's from now until the end of time."

Fostering of Significant Career Aspirations and Relevant Goal Setting

"Imagine that you are returning home to attend your twenty-five year high school class reunion. What career accomplishments do you share with your family and friends? If you were to receive an award related to your work, what would it be for? What would you have done to earn the award? How did you obtain the career position that you are in? What was your major in college? How do you interact with other people in your profession? Are you happy with your career?" Using this journal prompt, once at the beginning of camp and once near the end, Camp Planet Earth participants were guided to envision personal career choices and to think about what it would entail to arrive at aspired goals. While the content emphasis of CPE was on math /science career orientation, through a quite specific science career academic and field experience in the content area of geosciences, and one of the goals of this funded project was to inspire and inform these youth about this specific career area, there was a wide latitude of careers in which these young people were interested. Initiating their interest in this task at the beginning of the program allowed the camp staff to serve as sounding board and guide during the two-week interim before the youth returned to the task, both in casual conversations, in the instructional sessions and in evening talk sessions.

The views of these youth regarding careers for which they held high hopes were surprisingly well formed, high in aspiration, and specific in details about how they would achieve their career, what schooling or preparation would be necessary, and how these careers would benefit others as well as be rewarding to themselves. The careers that both the 1994 and 1995 groups, both males and females, aspired to were heavily oriented to various areas of engineering (about 20%) and to medicine (about 30%), although law, the arts, teaching, business and one or two athletic goals were also identified. They wrote logically and thoughtfully about changing career goals and about making the right choices; overall their comments were inspirational in themselves, but one will perhaps convey the depth and breadth of their thinking:

"After thinking about my career choice I have learned that a job in the engineering field might not be best for me. I know that I should start taking classes that I will need for my career choice, but I'm only a freshman and I don' have many class choices. After my freshman year is

when I will really begin to focus on my career choice. This doesn't mean that I'm hoping to slack off in my first year of high school, it means that I'm going to wait another year to make the right choice. Who knows maybe I will want to be the president or a doctor or a lawyer, but I don't want to make up my mind to [sic] soon because I might not be sure and it might be hard to change my mind because of the classes I will have taken."

For many the intensity of their aspirations was amazingly long standing---"a lifelong dream", "I've wanted to be a doctor for as long as I can remember!" Their reasons for selecting a particular career were also quite often service- or people oriented, "doing something for my people", "helping my family", giving "101% of myself every day to all of my students" (for which she envisioned she would have received a "teacher of the year award." One (an aspiring writer) said, "I want my name to be known all around for the good deeds that I do." Their plans of action were well delineated, e.g., "Twenty-five years after my graduation, I plan to be an engineer. . . In order to get to where I want to be I'm going to have to work long and hard. . . . "

The effect of discussions with their peers, comparing "notes" so to speak, in this climate of positive attitude toward professional careers, toward education, even toward staying in school for the next four years, appears to have been significant in shaping visionary goals and visionary planning. The camp staff also were apparently a significant influence in helping them with this task, as their journal entries in fact indicated how important the influence of their experience at Camp Planet Earth was on what they would be able to do. While the reality of economics, social pressures, and multiple family situations may set in upon return to their home sites, the current visions for most were intense and would be reinforced in the discussions with teacher/ counselors back at their University Outreach Center over the next four years, or as long as they remained in contact with those centers established for just that purpose. Revisiting their personal journals and the renewal through chances to talk again about their experience with the few others from their Outreach Center, and for a few the return to the program as a next year's assistant counselor were all ways in which program planners saw this vision as being sustained.

Discussion

In what ways have Coleman's markers (1995) been validated in this program? Certainly one can see strongly and consistently in the campers' career plots and projections a sense of what they might be capable of doing, and a belief in their ability to associate with strangers and be successful. Their journal entries, many of which are not cited here, conveyed a sense of freedom to express themselves and still be accepted (while retaining the strength of conviction to disagree with majority views), and a strong sense of being a unique individual accepted "no matter what you look like", as one male stated. The program was planned to bring together youth with strong

academic potential for as optimal a time as funds and situation permitted, in a setting that provided challenging content in ways that made the content exciting and the learning fun. Fun was a constant measure, in their terms, of what was "good learning" for these youth. The personal attention of caring teachers was, perhaps, the lynch pin that made all of the strategies planned so successful that without exception campers left expressing in various ways that this summer month was one of the most important experiences of their life to date.

The experience of journaling was for most a new experience and a major step in developing reflection skills and written communication skills. That, along with projecting a career plot with goals and steps for attainment, and the day to day discussions with caring and informed staff in a family-oriented mode were major strategies envisioned by Camp Planet Earth planners and implementation staff for facilitating the development of voice among these minority adolescents while ensuring nurturance of their gifted potential. The effect of these three strategies and the potentially positive influence on their academic progress during the following year(s), bolstered with follow up at Outreach Centers upon return to their home/school settings, were also believed to be major factors in maintenance of this effect after they left the program.

It should be noted that the written communication skills of the youth varied between youth as might be expected, and from one year to the next as was not expected. Those of the 1994 program were impressive in the extent of their vocabulary and in attention to such grammatical details as sentence formation, punctuation etc., as well as in the ability to express complicated ideas in well flowing form. The entries of the 1995 program participants tended to be more terse and less well constructed grammatically, and quite a few seemed to resist the task of reflective writing for many of their entries. Yet the entries were amazingly detailed and forthright about feelings and attitudes, and often extensive in their philosophical perspective. The handwriting of the latter group was itself often more labored than that of the previous year's participants. Among both groups, each of the participants had their own style of expressing ideas; as time went on they consistently focused more on the response content.

Although assured that neither their peers, nor the counseling/instructional staff would be audience for their journals, some of the youth assumed that some staff might be privy to their thoughts, stated in a way that seemed to convey acceptability; e.g., one girl in her last entry said "P.S. If I don't get another journal [entry] I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the J.C., counselors and camp staff. I had a great time and it's been a fun summer."

It seems appropriate to use one of the more extensive entries from the 1995 participants to convey the accomplishments toward acquisition of voice that occurred through the efforts of CPE. It is perhaps also appropriate to consider that the terminology of this youth (with aspirations for veterinary medicine changing to human medicine) may well have prompted the authors of this paper to focus on the concept of "voice" as a way to describe the central mission of CPE. The

evaluations of this youth's intellectual alertness, leadership, academic and social self concept and sociability by counseling staff began at 2's and 3's during the first week and quickly moved to 4's and 5's over the course of the camp; major comments about her were that she "actively participates and volunteers information regularly." The prompt for this entry was to "Imagine that you are writing an article for your school newspaper. Describe how Camp Planet Earth is a good learning environment. Why do you think CPE is a good learning environment?"

She wrote, "A good learning environment is where opinions are voiced, ideas are shared and learning is fun and comfortable. These all describe Camp Planet Earth (an organization that provides hands on science to youth). I know I can relate from personal experiences. Unlike public schools everyone is a family and works together in an organised [sic] way to accomplish their own goals. The counselors there are great! They believe in you and they give you confidence which gives everyone a strength inside! Learning there is always fun because you learn by getting to experience an actual test of the knowledge! Whenever you feel down someone is there to cheer you up and it helps to know that you don't have to challenge anything alone! If I could learn in this atmosphere everyday I would but unfortunately I can't. Luckily it's taught me something more about myself I never knew before!" Exclamations points were included in her entry. Her ideas convey quite succinctly the concept of acquiring individual voice, the climate necessary to do so, and the power of the concept of 'voice' in the sequence of nurturing gifted potential.

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Note: The main body of data reported in this article was gathered under the support of The National Science Foundation Summer Science Camps (SSC) Program, NSF Grant No: HRD-9350572 to Principal Investigators Sturdivant, Giardino, Paris, & Valdes, Center for Academic Enhancement, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. We would like to thank especially Avonda Fessler, Rodney Paris and the rest of the camp staff for their contributions to the collection of data on Camp Planet Earth and all of the youth who attended, whose sincerity, enthusiasm and willingness to reflect thoughtfully, facilitated a closer understanding of their processes of maturation.